SHRI RAMAKRISHNAHEGDE; Sir, there is a very good proposal called the Asian Railway Project of ESCAP. Once this project is implemented, the whole area will be opened up. Until'then we have no other course and transport has to be done mainly through river.

SHRl JAYANT MALHOUTRA: Sir, I am going to be very brief. When multinational companies are allowed an entry in the small scale industries, they are forced to export 50 or 75 per cent of their produce. But, there arc some multinational companies in India which have an enormous knowhow in food processing industry and especially a company called Pepsi Cola has recently acquired the world's largest food processing company called Tropicans which has an enormous knowhow. 1 would like to know from the Government whether it would consider of forcing the Pepsi Cola to go and invest heavily in the North-East because by driblets there will be no development of the North-East. In order to develop exotic fruits there, which would be exported to India and other countries by this company, this compay is doing a lot of work in South America. This company has the world's largest knowhow for food processing.

SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE: Sir, 1 am afraid that we cannot force any multinational or Indian company to go there and do this and do that. We will provide all facilities for such industrial units to go there, to produce and export.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Putting VSP on a Firm footing

*565. SHRI YERRA ^IARAYANA-SWAMY: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to put Visakhapatnam Steel Plant on a firm footing;

(b) whether there is any proposal to sell part of the equity of VSP; and

(c) what steps have to be taken, in terms of technology upgradation to make Visakhapatnam Steel Plant healthy and self-sustaining alongwith full details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRl NAVEEN PATNAIK): (a) yes. Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL) have appointed a reputed consultant for preparing a comprehensive revival package for RINL (Visakhapatnam Steel Plant). This will cover all aspects including technological issues.

गुजरात में इस्पात परियोजनाएं स्थापित करना

*566. **श्री अनन्तराव देवशंकर दूवे**: क्या इस्पात और खान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) गुजरात में आठवीं योजना के दौरान इस्पात परियोजनाएं स्थापित करने हेतु कुल कितनी धनराशि दी गई;

(ख) उक्त धनराशि से कितनी इस्पात परियोजनाएं स्थापित की गई;

(ग) क्या परियोजनाओं की स्थापना हेतु उपलब्ध कराये गए ऋणों पर ब्याज की दर में कोई रियायत दी जा रही है; और

(घ) क्या आदिवासी क्षेत्रों में इस्पात परियोजनाएं स्थापित करने के लिए कोई प्राथमिकता दी जाती है?

इस्पात और खान मंत्री (श्री नवीन पटनायक): (क) आठवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना अवधि के दौरान गुजरात में इस्पात परियोजनाएं स्थापित करने के लिए केन्द्र सरकार अथवा गुजरात सरकार द्वारा कोई बजटीय प्रावधान नहीं किया गया था।

(ख) से (घ) उपरोक्त (क) को ध्यान में रखते हुए प्रश्न नहीं उठता।

Committee under Equal Remuneration Act

*567. SHRI CO. POULOSE:
SHRI JIBON ROY:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of India have constituted a Committee under the Equal Remuneration Act;

(b) if so, the composition of the Committee and the date of last meeting of the Committee;

(c) whether Government have given an assurance to reconstitute this Committee; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Committee comprises of 21 members, including the Chairman. Out of this, 12 are non-official members. More than half the members are women. Nomination to the Committee has been made from amongst the representatives of the Central Government, State Governments/ UT Administration, Members of Parliament, Employers' Organisation, Employees' Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations engaged in the study and welfare activities of women labour. The last meeting of the Committee was held on 7th April, 1995. It was decided in the 34th session of the Indian Labour Conference held on 18-19 Dec. 97 that the Committee should be reconstituted, Accordingly the Committee is under reconstitution.

Central Legislation for Agricultural Workers

*568. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: 'Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the States which are opposing the Central Legislation for agricultural workers;

(b) whether Government will announce any package of assistance for agricultural workers; and

(c) whether Government will provide financial assistance for agricultural workers who are jobless because of the sharp fall of prices of the cash crops like rubber, pepper and cotton?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): (a) Certain States like Punjab, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh have .expressed reservations about the desirability of having a Central Legislation, Whereas, some others like Meghalaya, Sikkim, Nagaland, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Goa have said that the proposed law would not be relevant for them.

(b) There is no such proposal.

(c) Financial assistance for rural jobless including agricultural workers is already available under various schemes like Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, Employment Assurance Schemes, Integrated Rural Development Programe, Training of Rural Youth for self employment. Crop Insurance Scheme and supply of improved tool kits to rural artisans, etc. However, there is no proposal for financial assistance on account of fall of prices of the cash crops.

Agricultural Export Policy

*569. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of long term agricultural export policy; and

(b) the list of high priority sectors which qualify for automatic approval by the Foreign Investment Board for Foreign Equity upto 51 per cent?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The policy of the government regarding exports of agricultural products is governed principally by the concerns of India's food security maximising farm incomes and earning foreign exchange. Export regime in respect of agricultural products has been liberalised. 'Very few items are now either prohibited for exports or their exports are restricted or are subject to quantitative ceilings. Major items for which the exports are banned include wheat and wheat products and sugar except under preferential quota to the EU/USA.

(b) The list of high priority sectors in the area of agricultural production, plantations and manufacture of food products, which qualify for automatic approval by the Foreign Investment Board for Foreign Equity upto 51 % is given below:

Agricultural Production: Agricultural production not elsewhere classified (n.e.c); Certified high yielding hybrid seeds and synthetic seeds.

Plantations: Plantation n.e.c; Certified high yielding plantations developed through plant tissue culture.

Manufacture of Food Products: Preparation and preservation of meat; Hreservattion of meats except by canning; Processing and